



STEPS TO SILVER

A GUIDE TO LINKED LEARNING SILVER CERTIFICATION™

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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide is intended to help district staff, school administrators, pathway staff, and postsecondary, industry, and student support partners in preparing for Linked Learning Silver Certification.

It provides a roadmap to help you understand the certification process, self-assess against the Silver standards, and collect a body of artifacts that reflect the high-quality work and outcomes of the pathway.

Questions? Suggestions?

Contact the Linked Learning Alliance,
certification@linkedlearning.org



ABOUT LINKED LEARNING SILVER CERTIFICATION

Linked Learning Certification promotes the continuous improvement of Linked Learning pathways to provide proven high-quality integrated learning experiences and positive student outcomes for all student populations. Silver and Gold levels provide pathway teams the opportunity for comprehensive self-assessment and independent evaluation and validation of their pathway work.

Silver certification demonstrates that a pathway has in place the core components of a high-quality Linked Learning pathway. Silver certification helps drive the work of pathway teams by engaging key stakeholders including pathway staff, administrators, counselors, students, and industry partners in the design and development of the pathway.

Silver certification standards, summarized below, were developed in collaboration with the diverse field of Linked Learning educators, and support continuous improvement for all. Access the complete standards at LinkedLearning.org/Certification

| INTEGRATED PROGRAM OF STUDY | WORK-BASED LEARNING | INTEGRATED STUDENT SUPPORTS |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Student-centered learning connected to postsecondary and industry expectations.</p> | <p>A continuum of meaningful experiences with work and real-world applications of learning.</p> | <p>Meeting the developmental needs of each young person to equip all for a successful transition to college and career.</p> |
| <p>A cohort structure in which students participate in at least 1 CTE course and 1 core curriculum course as a group.</p> <p>An integrated program of study includes academic and CTE/career-themed courses that qualify students for a range of postsecondary options, including admission to public universities. The program of study includes a CTE/career-themed sequence of at least three courses allows students to learn through lens of an industry or career.</p> <p>Interdisciplinary projects at each grade level integrate core academic and CTE/career-themed curricula.</p> <p>Early college credit opportunities are available to students through AP, IB, or dual-enrollment options.</p> <p>Pathway teams collect data on college preparatory and CTE/career-themed course completion, postsecondary credits earned, and graduation.</p> | <p>The continuum of planned career experiences for students enables them to gain awareness of a broad range of careers within the industry theme, explore specific careers of interest, and participate in work-based learning opportunities.</p> <p>Career awareness activities motivate students to explore a broad range of career options that inform future decision-making.</p> <p>Career exploration is driven by students' interest in specific career paths, rather than an overview of many</p> <p>Career preparation enables students to experience firsthand what it might be like to have a specific career.</p> <p>Pathway teams collect data on career awareness, exploration, and preparation</p> | <p>College and career preparation and support helps students set goals and work towards attaining them. College admissions activities prepare and support students as they navigate the college admissions process. Job application activities prepare students to navigate career choices.</p> <p>Orientation activities, offered annually, prepare students for pathway success.</p> <p>Differentiated interventions support struggling students</p> <p>Pathway teams collect data on pathway admissions, intervention services, and college/career planning.</p> |

SUBMISSION DEADLINES

There are no submission deadlines for certification review. The Linked Learning Alliance will review submissions for Silver certification on a rolling basis. Pathway teams can expect feedback on their submission roughly two weeks after submitting for review and the whole Silver certification process takes approximately one month from submission to awarding. Pathways may begin the process at any time utilizing the [certification registration form](#) and [certification portal login](#).

CERTIFICATION FEES

The fee for Silver certification is \$749 per pathway, covering the duration of the two-year certification period. Payment is due prior to Silver certification awarding. Silver certification is valid for two years, during which time pathways are encouraged to continue to deepen pathway work using the Gold standards. However, pathways have the option of recertifying under the Silver standards.

PREPARATION

DETERMINE PATHWAY READINESS

Linked Learning Certification is designed to support a process of continuous improvement toward positive college and career outcomes for all students. Silver certification is the first level in the certification process, and a prerequisite to Gold certification. Silver certification signifies that the foundational structures of a high-quality pathway are in place. Review this guide and the Silver standards to determine if your program has the necessary components. If your pathway is recertifying Silver documentation, update your data and artifacts if needed to reflect your current program.

FORM A CERTIFICATION TEAM

The foundation of a high-quality pathway and a successful certification is a strong team of pathway CTE and core academic teachers, site and district administrators, counselors, parents and students, and industry and postsecondary partners. Team members work together and have a common understanding of their roles in the pathway, and in the certification process.

The pathway certification lead should be responsible for initiating the certification process and granting access to the certification portal to appropriate team members.

ENGAGE IN SELF-STUDY

Linked Learning offers a promising set of strategies to ensure that every child has the best possible education. But only when the pathway is of high quality and equitable access can we be assured that students will meet college- and career-ready outcomes. The [self-study](#), benchmarked against the Silver and Gold standards, is at the heart of a process of continuous learning and improvement. Using the self-study tool provided, your pathway team can continually assess the degree to which the pathway is holistically meeting or exceeding the standards:



EXECUTION

COLLECT ARTIFACTS AND SUBMIT INFORMATION

We recommend pathways plan on approximately 4–6 weeks collecting and assembling artifacts, though there is no limit to the length of time a pathway chooses to spend on this step. The actual amount of time will be influenced by internal pathway schedules and the stage of development of the pathway.

Pathways will upload all artifacts and input all data within the certification platform. Pathways can access support and guidance documents directly through the platform

CONFIRMATION

SUBMIT FOR APPROVAL

Once your artifacts are collected and organized, submit via the certification platform. The submission must receive district approval prior to being reviewed by the Alliance. The Alliance certification team may ask for clarification and/or additional artifacts—if so, you will have the opportunity to make adjustments before the resubmitting. Once you resubmit, the Alliance will review your application and will determine whether or not your pathway is Silver certified.



GO FOR GOLD

Silver certification is a significant milestone—but it is not the finish line! We encourage all Silver pathways to continue your certification journey by working toward [Gold certification](#)—the highest quality standard for Linked Learning pathways.

The Linked Learning Alliance is here to help:
certification@linkedlearning.org.



Linked Learning is a systemic approach to education dedicated to the idea that students work harder and dream bigger when their learning connects with them and connects them to the world. Linked Learning gives students the supports they need to prepare for college and career, and helps them grow through real work experiences so they can fully participate in shaping civic, cultural, and economic life. Proven in California and spreading across the United States, this approach works because it is built on relevance, equity, and hope.

The Linked Learning Alliance is the engine that drives the Linked Learning movement—a national coalition of educators, employers, and community organizations dedicated to success for all young people. The Alliance helps create public will for equity and excellence in education, elevate the practice of Linked Learning across America, and advance policies that serve and support all youth.

Learn more at [LinkedLearning.org](https://www.linkedlearning.org)